Robert A. Bogash
2020 Pathfinder Award Recipient in the At-Large Category

Robert A. Bogash had an eclectic career at The Boeing Company before retiring in 1995. Since then, he has spent his time being active with The Museum of Flight and supporting exhibit acquisitions at other prominent museums and institutions around the world. An avid pilot, he built his own RV-12 two-seat airplane which he has flown all over the western United States.

Bogash is especially known as a collector and restorer of large aircraft for The Museum of Flight Collection. His reputation as the go-to guy for getting almost anything accomplished on behalf of the Museum was established many years ago and continues today. Most of the activities and events in his career have been driven by his love of airplanes and his dedication to the people who love airplanes.

He graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and is also a licensed fixed wing pilot and flight engineer. This led to a distinguished 30-year career at The Boeing Company, where he worked during his initial 13 years as an engineer in Customer Support. Next, he moved to the 737/757 Division in Renton, where some of his assignments included 737 Factory Liaison Engineering, Flight Test Engineering, Engineering Configuration Manager for the 757 airplane, Renton Division Special Projects Manager, and Marketing Manager for Used Airplane Sales. He also played a key role in supporting legendary Boeing VP Richard W. Taylor in developing two-pilot flight decks and the use of twin-engine jetliners for extended twin operations known as ETOPS.

Bob spent the last nine years of his Boeing career as the Director of Quality Assurance for the Materiel Division. While he was Director of Technical Quality Assurance for all of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, he helped to begin Boeing’s transition into a continually improving Total Quality System. He also developed an all new quality system, known as the Advanced Quality System, that resulted in reducing defective parts by more than 50% over a four-year period. This system was so successful, it was adopted by more than 20,000 companies, many outside the aerospace industry, and was taught in more than 24 colleges and universities in four countries.

Bogash has been an active volunteer at The Museum of Flight in Seattle since its beginnings in 1965. He has been both Chairman and Member of the Museum’s Aircraft Acquisition Committee for many years; and he managed numerous major projects for the institution. Important aircraft for which he was a leader in obtaining for the Museum include the Boeing prototypes of the 727 and 747 airplanes, a de Havilland Comet 4C, a NASA Lockheed F-104, a USAF Boeing B-52 bomber and a US Navy Douglas A-4 Skyhawk flown by the Blue Angels. A particular acquisition that Bogash is extremely proud of is the British Airways Concorde G-BOAG, which was acquired in November 2003 after a 19-year effort.

He has participated in the restoration of numerous historical aircraft including the Museum’s B-17F, and the Confederate Air Force’s B-29. Since Bob’s retirement, he has become even more active in the restoration and maintenance of many of the Museum’s airplanes. Of note, Bogash led the restoration of the Number One 727 from sitting on the Paine Field airport to flying condition; the airplane was successfully flown to Boeing Field in 2016 after sitting dormant for 25 years. He also led the restoration of the prototype 737 airplane, maintaining it in airworthy condition for 6 years at Moses Lake, Washington, until it too was successfully flown to the Museum in 2003.

From 2005 to 2010, Bogash guided the acquisition of a Lockheed Super G Constellation, first in Toronto, later during its restoration at Rome, New York, and currently on display at the Museum.

Beginning in 2006, Bogash started hunting for a 1934 Lockheed Model 10 Electra—Kelly Johnson’s first airplane design—to bookend with his last, the SR-71 Blackbird. Bogash, as a big Kelly Johnson fan, has been instrumental in bringing eight of Kelly’s best designs to the Museum. The airplane he found was a Model 10E, identical to the airplane in which Amelia Earhart disappeared in 1937—right down to having flown around the world replicating her famous flight. This airplane arrived at the Museum in September 2013.

A born storyteller, Bob has a talent for archiving, illustrating and presenting vivid shows of adventures of both his and the airplanes he loves, as well as stories of his aeronautical heroes like Kelly Johnson. If you attend a Bob Bogash presentation, be prepared for in-depth coverage of the subject matter, humorous exposure of irony and thoroughly researched facts and data.

Bob Bogash is an ultimate example of the engineer and leader admired for his enthusiastic energy, and for the people-centered person who can rally and lead a team to get the difficult things done. He is the very definition of what the Pathfinder Award was designed to represent.

Written by Alison Bailey, Associate Director of Development